



EARL BERRY GALL - Los Angeles Times

Park maintenance worker Art Perz rakes the front yard of the Key house. The house was built in 1898 and remodeled 10 years later.

OC008

DISCOVERY

Pack Rat Is One Key to Placentia's History

By PATRICK MOTT

No matter what—or how much—you collect, you are a piker, compared to the late George Gilman Key.

Key was the torchbearer of one of Orange County's pioneering citrus-growing families, and he had a keen eye for the local history of his hometown of Placentia. Before he died Jan. 31, Key used that talent to convert a good portion of his manor-like turn-of-the-century house just off Bastanchury Road into a sort of eclectic museum, a rambling kind of remembrance of the days when his father, George Benn Key, grew Valencia oranges on and around the little 2.2-acre knoll on which the house sits.

Today Key's house sits unoccupied (he was the last resident) and the house and surrounding orange grove and garden are administered by the Orange County Environmental Management Agency as a historical site. However, Key's penchant for collecting and displaying nearly everything he could get his hands on that was of any sort of historic value is much in evidence.

Key, born in 1896, was the second son of George Benn Key, who came to Placentia from Canada in 1893 to establish a citrus ranch and a local growers association. He built the house off Bastanchury Road in 1898 and 10 years later remodeled it, adding a south wing, porch, trellis and balconies.

George G. Key worked in the oil industry in Los Angeles County for 22 years after serving in World War I before he returned to Placentia with his wife, Hannah, to live in the family house.

And he began amassing a collec-

THE GEORGE KEY RANCH AT A GLANCE



KATHY HEDDE HALL / Los Angeles Times

Once-vital farm implements are now curiosities at the ranch.

Where: 625 W. Bastanchury Road, Placentia

Hours: 7 a.m. to 4:30 p.m., Monday through Friday

Entrance to grounds: By appointment and guided tour only. Tours scheduled based on demand and limited to 30 people. Appointments should be made at least 2 weeks in advance.

Admission: \$1 per person per hour (1- and 2-hour tours are offered).

Parking: On adjacent streets only. No parking on grounds.

Information and tour appointments: (714) 526-4260

tion of nearly everything. County park ranger Linda Lorenzi said that Key was particularly fond of local children and spoke frequently at Placentia schools on the early history of the area, bringing along such lecture props as tools and household items dating from the early part of the century.

"And from what started out to be

simple, innocent collecting turned into about 8,000 items," Lorenzi said. "Some people thought he was eccentric for keeping so many things, but he was far, far from eccentric. He knew what he was doing."

And he knew where to put it all. Next to the house is a garage containing collections of black-

smithing and kitchen equipment, behind which is a small yard filled with antique farming implements such as wagons, plows, water pump machinery, scales, a wire press and mowing machines and cultivators.

A few steps away are two sheds with hundreds of tools and such curiosities as kerosene lanterns, a World War II-vintage Civil Defense helmet and a machine for stamping trademarks on oranges.

It is the house itself, however, that is most characteristic of George Key's selective acquisitiveness. Throughout the second-floor rooms are displayed dozens of old photographs of the Key family and other local residents, examples of early 20th-Century clothing, pocket watches, eyeglasses, citrus crate labels, dishes, marbles, a spinning wheel, and even such rarities as a shotgun shell loading block and a small collection of rare bird eggs. And all of it is arranged—much of it labeled—in precisely the way George Key left it upon his death.

The house, said Lorenzi, eventually will be repaired, restored and likely filled with furniture particular to the period between 1908 and 1915.

The house and its lush grounds (a garden next to the house is dotted by markers displaying verses from inspirational poems written by Key) are like an island, a true anachronism in a neighborhood of modern tract homes. And there are still 135 producing Valencia orange trees, Lorenzi said. Three of them might even be considered part of Key's eclectic collecting. They are original plantings, dating from 1893.

Patrick Mott is a regular contributor to Orange County Life.

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Idea

Home and Its Resident Speak of Placentia's History

Residence, Contents Are 'Living Museum' of County's Early Days

By PENELOPE MOFFET

By the front door to George Key's Placentia home, a little below a large brass bell, four red plastic signs present both practical and personal messages for visitors.

One sign with an arrow indicates that a "Lovers Lane" exists in the garden south of the house; the other notices are less directional, but still directive. "Where two hearts are joined, there happiness abounds." "A kindly word spoken is like a pebble dropped into a pool of water; it radiates in all directions." "If you must grow old, stay young while you are doing it."

Key himself has clearly taken the last bit of advice to heart, for at 87 this longtime Orange County resident continues to be active in community affairs, interested in the area's history and full of anecdotes and quiet jokes.

The sayings by his front door, like the spherulites sprinkled on metal plaques throughout the landscaped yard, are Key's creations. They're "what I dug up in the garden," he claims, during long hours of planting and pruning.

They're part of how he's lived his life, just as the big ranch house he occupies is a part of his history and the history of Orange County. Already accessible to occasional tour groups, the home and its contents will one day be a museum open to the public.



George Key walks in front of his Placentia home; completed in 1908, it will be part of historical park after Key's death.

PHOTO BY KARI EDDIE HALL / SAN ANGELO PRESS

Lifetime Treasures Retained

The home was sold to the county four years ago along with the 2.2 acres that remain of the once 20-acre Key citrus ranch. With the sale, Key and his wife, Hannah, retained lifetime tenancies of the house. Hannah died last fall after a brief illness, and now Key lives on the land with a daughter, Dorothy Jensen, who is a grand-daughter in her own right.

Key was born on a neighboring ranch in 1896. Two years later his father began building the Key Ranch house, completing construction in 1908. One of eight children, Key is the only survivor of that family. "I left 'em. I'm the only apple left hanging on the tree, and I'm half rotten and ready to fall," he said, eyes twinkling behind spectacles.

The apple still retains a hard core of information, however. While showing a visitor around his house and grounds, the 85-year-old man related old dates and descriptions of the days on display. Everything in his collection of old photos, maps and farm implements was catalogued and labeled by Key himself, over a period of about 20 years.

Boy Scouts, Scouts, women's associations and university-level students of history sometimes come by tours of the memorabilia, the buildings and the grounds. In previous years, Key visited elementary classrooms, clubs and university halls to talk about the early days of Placencia and Orange County. While developing lectures and a 450-slide show, he taught himself a great deal of local history.

"I always have been interested in history," he said, "but I was never interested enough to get involved in it until the late '30s." Key said. "It kind of grew on me."

As the interest grew, so did the collection. By the early 1960s Key was contacting other long-term county residents to find out what turn-of-the-century farm implements and hand tools were rusting in their backyards and barns. Soon his own side yard and barns began to fill up with machinery from the days before tractors replaced horses.

Walking through the ranch grounds one encounters an overwhelming number of what were once everyday working tools. Different kinds of harrows and ridges for working the soil, a two-row corn-planting machine, a wagon for hauling hay and other crops, a water wagon, trowing machines, a hay rake, a harrow and a manure spreader are among the larger items Key has acquired. In the barns there are also scores of harnesses, horse harnesses, hand tools, animal traps, wasp pots and much more. Four years ago Key made a rough inventory of everything he had collected and found more than 1,500 items, including such small stuff as old postcards and books stored in the house.

'Evolution of Irons'

"Most of the things I have don't have much monetary value," said the self-taught historian, "just the value of memories."

Memories also abound in the material in the house. Several rooms are packed with old photographs, hymnals, antique baby clothes, old toys and small household items. One display shows the "evolution of irons" from one-piece metal blocks heated on stove tops to gasoline-powered irons to modern electric conveniences. A yellowed piece of newspaper, the front page of the Nov. 11, 1918, edition of The Times, declares



*I tell 'em I'm the only apple
left hanging on the tree and I'm
... ready to fall.*

"PEACE" in enormous type above an article announcing the end of World War I. Pictures of county pioneers are on all the walls, as are photographs that show the county and the Key Ranch as they used to be.

Key passed his favorite photographs to point out special features. Looking closely at small print on a picture of once-down-town-Placencia's Hotel Evans, one can read "Chicken Dinner Sundays 25¢" in the hotel's front window. There is also a picture of Key as a small boy, with a hose raised to attack a piglet. "I like to show that I was always ambitious," Key said. And a photograph of his future father-in-law manning the counter at the town's "leading grocery store," the People's Store. "Andrew (Jensen) would drive around by the ranches and take orders and deliver the next day. Now you can't get them to come to the counter (of modern stores) to wait on you," said Key.

Many of the people pictured in the photographs have names that would sound familiar to old-time Placencia and other Orange County residents: the McPaddens, the Kraemers, the Tuffres, the Gilmers. Present-day streets and parks are named after these late 19th-Century residents. Key personally knew many of those who were here at the turn of the century, just as he was acquainted with the contours of land shown in some of his landscape photos.

"The place (the ranch) has been in the family since the folks bought it in 1890," he said. "My earliest remembrance of Placencia was of it (covered with) citrus, grapes, hay for pasture. From our house to Irec there were only three or four neighbors. Everything was open country."

Orange and walnut groves also abounded, as did another crop, oil.

A blown-up photograph in the upstairs

Please see KEY, Page 16



Photo by KARLENE HALL / Lee Argon Times

1908 Majestic stove that belonged to A.E. Yorba can be seen during tours of the Key House.

KEY: Home is 'Living Museum' of Area's Past

Continued from Page 1

hallway shows the ranch and its surrounding area. A few houses can be seen, but a lot more trees and oil derricks are visible. However, "we were not fortunate enough to have any (derricks) on our land," although the family several times leased its property to oil companies for exploration, said Key.

As an adult, Key spent more than two decades working for the oil companies. He worked from 1933 to 1945 supervising drilling and construction, then production of oil, in Atwood, Huntington Beach, Long Beach, Signal Hill, Torrance and Lomita. For a little over two decades he and his wife lived in Los Angeles County.

School Named After Him

Then in 1945 they bought out the other half to the Key Ranch and came home. In Placentia again, Key initially worked as a free-lance carpenter. Then he became a director of maintenance for the Placentia School District. Meanwhile, he kept up his community involvement, putting in long hours as a scoutmaster, as a volunteer with the YMCA, as an elder with the Placentia Presbyterian Church. In 1979 a Placentia school for the mentally retarded was named the George Key School because Key "is a member of a pioneer family" who has "contributed a great deal to the community daily," according to Pauline Schars, school principal.

Other marks of merit have included being made honorary mayor of his hometown in 1977, serving as grand marshal in "Placentia on Parade" in 1982 and receiving an award of merit from the Orange County Historical Society in 1971.

About eight years ago, the Historical Society recommended that the county buy the Key Ranch, according to Virginia Carpenter, a local historian and society member. Not until 1980 was the purchase made, however, and the site was dedicated as a historical monument last October. Donald Dobmeyer, chair of the county Historical Commission, said the purchase was made with \$325,000 from Harbors, Beaches and Parks monies, to make the ranch a "historic park." Key donated his collection of artifacts.

Garden a Chief Delight

Nothing else quite like the Key Ranch exists within Orange County, said Carpenter, and what makes the site unusual is not so much the land or buildings but the collection of farm implements. "This being a living museum, it's something a little different," she said. "To me, the unique thing about it is the collections George has made. It's the only place people can go and see all

that stuff, all those farm implements. And his garden, to see how gardens used to be."

Key's garden is obviously still one of his chief delights. Walking along its gently winding path, he pointed out an enormous old pepper tree and mentioned, "I used to sleep under that when I was a boy, and the frogs would be singing."

Special features of the garden obviously look much care and consideration. A miniature white-washed facsimile of a church sits in one spot. A wire heart over which ivy has been trained to climb is suspended in another.

And then there is the "tree of mystery," so named by one of the red placards, to which a rhyme is attached.

*Though twisted and torn
By the storms that blow
It never gives up
But continues to grow.*



Crank telephone in hall speaks silently of past.

KEY Family

Orange County
Historical Commission

P.O. Box 4048
Santa Ana, CA 92702

Federation
Of Orange County Historical Organizations
Newsletter



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Supervisor Receives Statewide Acclaim

Orange County Supervisor Roger Stanton has been selected by the California Preservation Foundation as "Preservationist of the Year." The award was presented at the opening reception of the annual State Historic Preservation Conference on April 20 in Los Angeles.

Supervisor Stanton has been a strong supporter of history issues and historic preservation throughout his term on the Board of Supervisors, which includes its chairmanship in 1983 and 1987. As most of you know, he led the effort to save and restore the Old Courthouse, but many may not be aware that he has done many other things to help history. Supervisor Stanton has been a strong supporter of the County Archives, the Historic Park Acquisition and Development Program, and the Historic Resources Management Policy. He consistently supports history-related state legislation and private efforts as well, including the rehabilitation of historic buildings for use by the Discovery Museum of Orange County and United Cerebral Palsy of Orange County, on whose boards he serves.

Previous winners of the Preservationist of the Year award include state-elected officials such as Senators John Garamendi and Milton Marks, seismic engineering specialist John Kariotis, Pasadena Heritage advocate and National Trust advisor Claire Bogaard, and former SHPO Dr. Knox Mellon.

Congratulations, Supervisor Stanton!

Colorful Road Map Locates Orange County Historical Sites

A new, illustrated road map is available to those in search of Orange County history. Titled the "Orange County Centennial Historical Map," this full-sized multicolor map locates 164 sites and includes descriptive text on each locale. Sites with scheduled visiting hours are listed with contact phone numbers. Special inset maps clearly show those areas with historic districts. Color photos and attractive artwork decorate both sides.

The map is a joint Centennial project of the Orange County Historical Commission, Orange County Centennial, and the Automobile Club of Southern California. Maps may be purchased for resale by non-profit organizations for \$50 per 50 maps (in lots of 50 only). Suggested retail price is \$4. Maps may be purchased by contacting the Orange County Historical Commission, P.O. Box 4048, Santa Ana, CA 92702, (714) 834-5560.



OCCGS REFERENCE ONLY



George Gilman Key

August 29, 1896 - January 30, 1989

Hundreds of George Key's friends filled to overflowing the Placentia Presbyterian Church on February 5th to pay their final respects to this man. George had offered his friendship generously to his community. Children were entertained at his ranch; he visited the sick, and he sent volumes of letters regarding Orange County's history and samples of his poetry to his many correspondents. A school and a church building have been named in George Key's honor, and his awards are too numerous to list. Historic Key Ranch in Placentia, purchased by Orange County to be retained as a park/museum, will allow future generations to appreciate George Key and his outstanding historical collections.



Both George and his wife, Hannah, were born in Placentia and were classmates throughout their school years. They were married in 1917. George served in the Merchant Marine during World War I, then he supervised oil drilling and production in the Long Beach area for many years.

The Keys moved back to Placentia in 1945, taking over the management of the Key family ranch where George had been born. The Key property had once been part of the Southern California Semi-Tropic Fruit Company, a pioneer in growing the Valencia orange. George's father, George Benn Key, managed this large citrus acreage. He bought the twenty acres which became Key Ranch and built the milly home in 1898.

Until his retirement in 1961, George also supervised maintenance of the Placentia School District. During his years with the schools, he began collecting history and artifacts concerning early education in the county, and he also gathered all sorts of agricultural tools and equipment from friends and neighbors who were selling their ranches for tract development.

Although the Keys were among the last to sell their ranch property, they decided to sell all but 2.2 acres in the 1960s. This property was offered to the County. Through the dedicated efforts of the Orange County Historical Commission, joined by many other community groups, historic Key Ranch was purchased by Orange County in 1980 with the agreement that George and Hannah would be able to live out their lives on the ranch. Hannah Key died in 1983.

After the ranch became County property, George continued to give his time and energy, adding to his collections, aiding park rangers in cataloging thousands of items, and maintaining his gardens of plants and verse. The historical collections that the Keys donated to the County fill the house, grounds, and sheds.

George also wrote a book, Early Placentia, published by the County for his ninetieth birthday, and a collection of poems, "The Joy of Living."

George will be greatly missed by all of us who knew him. His wit and humor continued to the end, which he seemed to know was imminent. Since his wife and siblings and most of his childhood friends preceded him in death, he often remarked, "I'm the last apple hanging on the tree, and I'm about to fall!" He also commented to his pastor, "Do you suppose when I meet St. Peter at the pearly gates, Hannah will be there, too, with a plate of cookies?"

Esther Cramer



PLACENTIA

Key Ranch Holds Some Local History Treasures

By PEGGY HESKETH

History hangs like sweet perfume on the old Key Ranch in Placentia. Once home to one of the area's pioneer citrus growers, the turn-of-the-century landmark provides visitors today with a glance back at the county's agricultural roots.

Built in 1898 by George Benn Key—then superintendent of the Semi-Tropical Fruit Co., which developed and planted California's first commercial Valencia orange groves—the rustic Victorian-style house is the oldest standing home in Placentia. In fact, three of the original orange trees planted by Key in 1893 still stand in the grove that fronts the house like a barrier against time.

Declared an Orange County Historical Landmark, the venerable house and surrounding 2.2 acres of what was originally a 20-acre ranch just off Bastanchury Road was purchased from Key's son, George Gilman Key, by the county in 1960 in order to ensure its preservation.

Something of a local landmark himself, the younger Key had returned to his family's ranch with his wife, Hannah, in 1945, after retiring from a successful career in the oil industry, according to Linda Lorenz, an Orange County park ranger. Lorenz has spent most of the past five years conducting guided tours of the ranch and cataloguing the thousand of artifacts that Key, who died earlier this year, began collecting in the early 1950s.

Except for the family's original entry rug, Lorenz said most of the first-floor furnishings are from the 1940s, when Key moved back into the house.

The second story, however, is replete with relics from Orange County's early days.

The door names on the hallway exhibit of old school-books reads like a veritable Who's Who of Orange County founding families. Inside a bedroom bedecked with classic orange crate labels, Teddy Roosevelt's bulky old face adorns a 1912 Progressive Party (Bull Moose) battle flag that hangs above a faded newspaper proclaiming the opening of Hoover Dam.

Virtually up until his death at age 92, Key remained active, tinkering in his outdoor workshops and tending to the Vease Garden, where Key had placed excerpts from his published poems.

Today the ranch is lush with an assortment of well-tended greenery from bamboo to bird of paradise blooms.

The Key Ranch is open for guided tours Monday through Friday, by appointment only. For information call (714) 528-4293.

...and being a real
-city thing out in that direction.
And don't forget yourself it's
a case of a short time it is. You
want, of course, and someone to
do it for you. There are plenty of
companies across the page filling
the yellow pages. But if you want
to take a whack at it yourself,
here are some suggestions:

First, you're got to know how
to find these leaks. That may
sound easy. And look, when the
city first sends you've got
strategically placed to catch your
little waterfalls, right?

Wrong. On the problem with
roof leaks is that water may just
be at the place, going for awhile
not to trouble you, then drain
or pour out at another location.
That piping inside is probably
going to be doing an electrical
job, with or without. Later,
the water will show up on your
floor or ceiling.

Keep in mind while you're
looking for the leak that the
water is likely to be higher than
the entry. Water runs downhill—
probably not all the stuff
remains!

If you're looking for your leak
inside, by looking for it on a
map of the house, you
shouldn't see anything.
Cubicles, basins, don't have
any, you need to know, you'll
likely find you're in a window,
dark space, opening between the
floor, between the area of the
house where the leak occurs and
look for the light going through
a hole.

If you've been a good little boy
or girl — even since Christmas
— you'll find the leak will take your
own way. Drive a wire through
the hole as it will show in the
top.

If you've been a bad little boy
or girl and you don't find the leak
by the outside through the hole
to be sure, look for a deep stain.
If a stain is around the hole and
there's no deep stain, see a
jacket hole in your water on the
roof in the nearest area. You'll
get a deep stain there.

After you've found the leak
and, however, a long way through
the area. This may seem to be
adding to the trouble, but you've
got to reach the area of origin,
and this is one way to spot it
when you get outside.

And, you, you will have to get
outside — to get on the roof — to
do the job. If you're lucky,
and the rain or wind through the
and techniques have worked, all
you have to do is remove or patch
the problem.

If you're unlucky and can't find
the leak by the job-through
method, try spotting it from
inside. In general, it's not the
area of the roof where wind and
rain hit that are subject to the
most pressure leaks. It's the
area where the rain hits the
house.

Check out at points where
chimney pipes poke through.
Check over roof eaves and the
"valleys" where roof sections
meet.

Patience or substituting
things, involves being extremely
careful. If you can catch the
standing water, get out the gun,
play in a tube of roofing cement
and do your thing. If there's a
good sized hole, you may have to
substitute shingles, add an
additional plate under the shingle
or, if the job is too complex, call
a professional.

But remember that finding the
leak is a big step. But don't be
afraid to take it. It's better than
watching falling on your head.

Jack H. Carter is the Registrar's
columnist.



By Nick Hunter
The Register

In a sea of urban sprawl, it's an island of grace
and charm. From Alameda County's premier
park.

Clark will just the isolated 2.3-acre George Key
Ranch on Brentwood Road, just west of
Tramonto Avenue in Pleasanton. But in 89-year-old
George Key, who lives in the house that was built
in 1898, it must seem like only yesterday that
horses and buggies coming up his drive were the
only traffic he saw from his parlor window.

The house is almost hidden by tall oaks and an
extensive array of trees that Key tends with loving
care. In 1986, Key was persuaded by the Orange
County Historical Commission to sell the property to
the county rather than a developer, thus
saving a link to Orange County's pioneer days
and offering the public to love it. As part of the
deal, Key continues to live in the house.

The county may be getting the best of the deal:
Key, at 89, Key makes sure in the garden,
generates a lot of joyous for exhibits at the
ranch and frequently talks informally with those
on tours, especially children.

Key is not alone in caring for the property, of
course. County employees and a county park
ranger do much of the work.

But you can't fault the unsuspecting Key
digging in his garden or on his knees planting or
pruning, especially at this time of year.

Even the garden paths are full of history.
They've bordered in old bricks Key obtained from
2 African buildings that were torn down.

As you wind along these paths, you'll see many
varieties of flowers and plants, including anemone,
carnations, 21 different types of irises, many native
ferns and lilies. You'll also see examples of the
poetry Key still writes. It's posted on small cards
along a path that has been dubbed "Lance's
Lane." At one end of the path, Key grows in the
shape of a large heart.

The garden's history has changed during the
past decade because the trees have gotten so big
they block out much of the sun. But the shadows
provide a cool setting for the boxes that must be
arranged by appointment.

Among the trees that shelter the garden are 6



A large cedar tree guards its home in front of the
George Key Ranch house in Pleasanton.

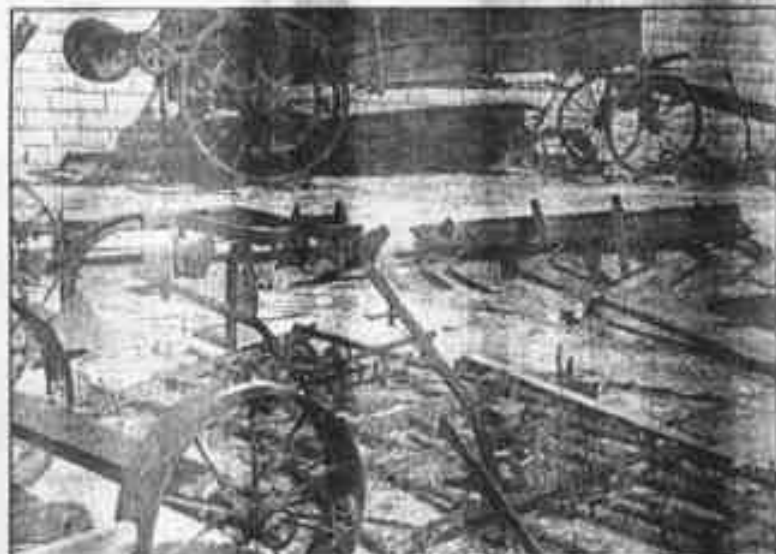
large cedar immediately in front of the house, a
100-year-old native oak planted by George's
mother, 125 Valencia and several orange trees,
valley oaks (rare for this area), Canary Island
pines and a variety of deciduous trees.

The large cedar that looks as if it's guarding
the house seems to set the scene perfectly. The
tree — like the house — is beautiful in its
simplicity, its practicality, its strength.

And that is a perfect description of this great old
house, which bears vaguely Victorian

Perhaps it's because the house was built over
the end of that era that it bears that look, but
research by Linda Loomis, an Orange County
Parks Ranger on the site, suggests that it may
also fall into the American Pastorsquare or
Victorian categories.

Basically, it's built with a hipped roof, it has
a small porch, two doors and an attic. A large
porch stretches across the front of the house and,
Please see RAAC112



Among the farm implements on display at the ranch are those barrows (foreground) used for cultivating fields.

Dequias, pincanthe, sweet ferns and native California lily are among the many plants in the garden surrounding the George Key house.

HOME



George Key, 88, sits on an old hay wagon in the back yard of the ranch in Placentia.

Nick Robinson/The Register

RANCH: House built in 1898 links OC's past to the present

FROM E1

If you imagine well, you can almost see the Key family rocking softly on big wooden chairs, listening to the night sounds after a big dinner.

The house was built by George's father, George Benn Key. With its shingles on the front center of the second floor, the house is indistinguishable from others from Southern California's early 20th century, and a lot like those in Key's native Ontario, Canada.

Wood framing and horizontal board siding make up the structure and outside of the house. While it sits now on a concrete foundation built in 1908, its foundation originally was of a redwood mud sill.

On the first floor are the parlor or living room, dining room and kitchen, two small bedrooms, a bathroom, den, breakfast room and service entry to the kitchen. The second floor has four bedrooms and a bathroom. The stairs to the

attic are at the rear of the bathroom.

Through the front door an entry hall divides the house. Ahead is the staircase to the second floor. To the left is the parlor, added in 1908.

To the right of the entryway is the dining room, formerly a music room. In one corner of the dining room an ornate fireplace with glazed brick seems to dominate the room despite its diminutive size.

Behind the dining room is the kitchen with its service entry. Also in the rear of the first floor are two small bedrooms and a den.

On the second floor, reached by an L-shaped staircase, are more bedrooms. It's here that Key's memorabilia is displayed. Some of the items are from the Key Ranch past, and others are from surrounding areas in Orange County. There are literally thousands of things ranging from a collection of old county newspapers to children's toys.

While each of the bedrooms on

the second floor now has an area rug, the floors originally were covered with grass mats. Each bedroom has two windows, except for the southeast bedroom which has one. Window glass throughout the house dates from 1898.

The original flooring in the house was 1-inch-thick-by-8-inch-wide redwood planks. Oak now covers the remainder of the first floor, but the second floor remains unadorned.

The walls throughout the house were originally lath and finally in 1908 were plastered and painted.

Much of the wood in the house originally had a mahogany stain

and varnish, but through the years some has been painted over.

There was no heating in the house when it was first built, but later fireplaces were added. When Key and his wife moved back into the house in 1965 — 26 years after they'd left it and his parents to be on their own — they installed a heating system on the lower floor.

Besides the garden and house, tours of the ranch include displays of farm implements and hundreds of old hand tools from Orange County's past. You can see the Key Ranch as part of a tour by appointment only. No entry fees are required. Call 634-7426.